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considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law, and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

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community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

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Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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583 his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not
584 sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

584 This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asék*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was
● 583 celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the
585 marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

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593 585 exclaiming: 'May that man die!' Whenever Nariya went to visit her she used to throw stones at him to drive him away. It was said that she was carrying on a love affair with a Nepali in her distant village. On one occasion the girl's parents came to Lingthem, but Nariya was too shy to say anything. At the end of April Tempa said that he threatened the parents that if they did not send the girl he would apply to the police station. He explained that he spoke after consultation with the Mandal because Nariya's uncle Ashyok had not enough sense.

On May 11th, 1937, Nariya went to fetch his wife home; on May 17th she returned with him but bringing with her a younger brother aged twelve to sleep with her as a chaperone. On May 18th she went away again to Mangan to see her father, but she returned still accompanied by the younger brother on May 20th. On this day took place one of the bi-monthly monastery feasts and Nariya's wife took this opportunity to become formally introduced into the village community. Although she still did not sleep with her husband she seemed to be settling down and was helping in the preparations for the big annual feast of Boom koor which was to take place three days later, helping with the cooking and so on. She did not talk much but sat about quite comfortably in the groups where people made rather a fuss of her. All the time she kept some small child by her, either her own younger brother or Pankek, a little girl of six. She seemed to find comfort in the presence of young children. Tobgé was familiar with her, hugging her and feeling her breasts, but she showed no resentment. She had on a clean new green blouse but a filthy dirty skirt. The general belief was that in a day or so Nariya would succeed in sleeping with her and that then the marriage would settle down completely and happily.

Nariya it is true was not a very attractive character. He had an extraordinarily high-pitched almost eunochoid voice and a slightly sly expression. He was an orphan; his father, when he lived, was the richest man in Lingthem and a great deal of the wealth in cattle had been expended on the funeral feasts for him and many other relations of his generation who had died very close to one another. Nariya wished to regain his father's wealth and was therefore, most exceptionally for a Lepcha, engaged in strenuous [556] economies, spending as little as he could, except when he had to give feasts, on clothes or food; he was rather secretive.

Of the other recently married men Rigya, Nariya's cousin and

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593 586 adopted brother, and Kutt'r were now getting on all right with their wives after a preliminary period of conflict in each case lasting about four years. Kutt'r who was eighteen years old was married at the age of fourteen to a wife one month after *asék*, before which he had never met her. She had only come to live with him in the last few months. First of all they disliked one another thoroughly; then by the pressure of their families they were brought to sleep together but did not do anything. Only in the last two or three months have they copulated together; now they like one another.

585 Gongyop's son was born in 1919; he is a very girlish-looking and under-developed boy and preternaturally shy; it will be remembered that he was drinking his mother's milk up to the age of ten. Before *asék* he did not know his wife; *asék* took place about six months ago. The girl is older and bigger than he and at first he was frightened of her, though she spoke nicely to him. On May 19th he returned from his third visit to her at which they had slept together. He came home with a look on his face like a cat which had just been fed on cream and seemed rather proud of himself; he said that now he likes his wife. Datoop's younger son was *asék* by proxy for his elder brother Pichi; but Pichi at the beginning of May definitely refused the marriage and instead the youngest son was going to marry the girl. On May 9th he went off with his father to pay a visit to his bride. I asked the boy what present he was taking to his parents-in-law, at which his father replied 'His present is between his legs'. He was, however, also taking a leg of meat with him. Datoop hoped that, if the harvest was good, the girl would be brought home in the autumn.

On March 19th Mikmar, Chano's eldest son, aged thirteen, was *asék*'d to an unknown girl three or four years older than himself. By May 9th he had paid the girl three visits. They are patently unable to sleep together for Mikmar is still very childish, but they get on well enough together and give each other food.

584 In Lingthem there were only four unmarried girls over the age of twelve; of these Prumtu, the girl with the squint, is likely to wait some time before marrying and Tafoor's eldest daughter has only just passed twelve and has not yet been asked for. The other two girls are the two eldest daughters of Pargetu, aged sixteen and twelve respectively; they have been *asék*'d to two brothers. The 593 younger girl, Tangvoong, gets on well enough with her young husband, but the older one, Kondé, does not; the two both fight

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like cat and dog. This girl had a very unpleasant eruption of boils all over her face and I saw a great deal of her because she used to come up every third day to have her boils dressed; they were cured before I left. According to Tafoor, who is a very distant sort of uncle, the girl got her boils from a devil which was brought by her husband with the *asék* presents. She does not like her husband, and has so far refused to sleep with him (or, Tafoor thinks, anybody else). Tafoor considers that the fault really lies with the husband, who should have forced her to sleep with him when she came to his house; he did not, probably because he was ashamed. If she persists in not liking him she will be spoken to and given a beating to make her; it is simply naughtiness on her part.

During my stay in Lingthem Kondé was taken to visit her prospective husband once and the husband came also twice to her house to help her parents work. The situation did not develop in any way. Kondé had got set into an attitude of rebellious mutism in which she refused to do anything or to speak to anybody unless it was absolutely necessary. The only person who seemed to have any influence with her was Mrs. Datoop, who was a distant 'aunt by marriage'. Her attitude was completely mulish; so to speak, she dug in her feet and put back her ears and refused to budge. She showed no preference for anybody other than her betrothed; her attitude was entirely negative, she did not want to marry and especially not to marry the man provided for her. When she addressed him she used to use the childish abusive phrases, which have normally been abandoned and forgotten by people of her age. Kondé was a good and industrious girl and a considerable help to her parents, but she did not and would not get married. It was, I think, much more the fear of separation from her parents and home, even though she would be accompanied by a younger sister, which motivated her refusal, rather than actual dislike of her husband, who chiefly personified exile.

These examples will show that in about half the cases of betrothal there is considerable hostility on the part of the girl. For the girl marriage means nearly always geographical separation from her family—almost a second weaning—and many of them do not face this prospect cheerfully. This psychological disturbance cannot by any means be equated with puberty for betrothal may take place at any age from eight upwards. It is an intellectual and not a physical disturbance. It seems to me very probable that it is the successful overcoming of this second weaning which gives to young

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husband, but can take as companion any other member of her husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopön was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held responsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for
[591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when
[856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its
857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he
[871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud,
[524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular
[534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

● 593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1,
593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very
842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analysis]

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with